

23 January 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: CIA Member, Intelligence Information  
Handling Committee

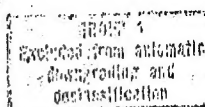
SUBJECT : Security Aspects of Expanding CIA  
Participation in COINS

1. Reference is made to your verbal request on 22 January 1970 for information concerning the security aspects of expanding CIA participation in COINS from the current two or three hour-a-day period to full time.

2. Previous agreements, based on the necessity of affording special protection to our SANCA file, reflected that the SANCA file would not be resident in the time-sharing system while that system is open to query from other members of the COINS network. This has resulted in COINS being permitted access to the time-sharing system two, and more recently three, hours each day. During these periods of COINS operation the SANCA file is removed from the system.

3. Although there are other files on the OCS time-sharing system which could be afforded similar protection, historically the security problem involving COINS access to the CIA system has centered around the sensitivity of the SANCA file. The sensitivity of the latter is predicated among other reasons on the fact that it contains Agency source information.

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4. While it is recognized that from an operation viewpoint it is desirable to permit both COINS and SANCA to utilize the system simultaneously on a full-time basis, the security factors involved and the need for compartmentation do not permit this without a high degree of confidence in the compartmentation features of the time-sharing system itself.

5. While it is acknowledged that several security features have been introduced into the operation of the time-sharing system, approval for simultaneous SANCA and COINS utilization of the system could not be recommended by this Office without an analysis and testing of these features. The decision would rest with senior Agency management.

6. To permit an informed decision, a thorough analysis, evaluation, and testing of the security of the system hardware and software are considered necessary. This effort would permit quantification of the degree of protection provided by the system and useable evidence that its operation is or is not adequate from a security viewpoint.

7. While some effort has been directed during the past year toward this end, a lack of resources, together with changes in system hardware and software, has prevented this analysis and testing from being completed. An examination of resources available to conduct such an analysis and tests in the coming months does not look promising. While the Office of Security is genuinely interested in executing a program of this nature, both with reference to possible simultaneous SANCA/COINS utilization of the time-sharing system and for evaluating other Agency systems, with the constraints of limited manpower and other resources, it is apparent that no concerted effort can be initiated toward this end at the present time.

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8. It is perhaps necessary then to seek other alternatives for resolving the issue. Among such other alternatives is a suggestion voiced previously by the undersigned that the CIA COINS files be transferred to the CRS computer system and that the latter serve as the Agency segment of COINS.



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Chief, Information Processing Branch  
Office of Security